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Official Report (Hansard) Daily Edition

Social Development Committee

Estimates, Social Development Policy

Fourth Session, 30th Parliament

Tuesday, April 26, 1977

Speaker: Honourable Russell Daniel Rowe

Clerk: Roderick Lewis, QC

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LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO

SUPPLY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 1977

The committee met at 3:40 p.m.

ESTIMATES, SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT POLICY
(continued)

Mr. Chairman: I see a quorum. May we get started? The minister would like to make a few comments as a result of the closing part of yesterday's meeting, if you wouldn't mind.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Very briefly. Mr. Chairman, the Liberal critic has indicated her intention to ask that surveys, reports and studies be made public in each instance that the parties suspect such documents exist. I would like to deal briefly with that issue now, if you don't mind, Mrs. Campbell, rather than repeat myself each time the question is raised.

Although the policy field structure has been functioning in this province for five years, there still seems to be some confusion in the minds of the opposition parties as to the nature of the operation. As I tried to point out yesterday, policy secretaries are not super-ministers. The bulk of our work involves problem-solving through co-operative efforts of ministers and their staff.

I need hardly speak to legislators about the parliamentary system and the need for cabinet solidarity, which is the key to the British parliamentary system that we have adopted in this province. Of course, it would be politically useful to the opposition parties to gain access to information, policy options and sometimes diverging opinions which lead up to the formation of government policy. However, even the most recent private member's bill on freedom of information, put forth by a member of the official opposition, would exempt from the list of public documents those documents relating to policy decisions under consideration but not yet final.

Much of our work detailed in the briefing books that we have supplied to the opposition party critics would fall within that limitation. The vast majority of our efforts, with the exception of the work done by the four very fine advisory councils, are by their very nature interministerial and internal. One can imagine the reaction if the government were

to demand access to all documents in the possession of the opposition parties and all supporting evidence for their parties' positions. Of course, we are not going to do that.

Mrs. Campbell: Nobody suggested that.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to involve this committee in a debate on the issues of freedom of information. As you are all aware, a royal commission has been appointed to deal with that very complex subject. However, I do not intend to prejudice these deliberations by setting precedents, by releasing documents, simply because we have gone the step of providing more detailed briefing notes than ever before presented. I hope this new procedure, adopted in agreement by all parties, will prove beneficial to our discussions. These new rules were fashioned in the spirit of co-operation, and I sincerely hope that spirit will extend to our debate, but I thought we should make our position clear as to the release of all the material that was made reference to yesterday.

[3:45]

Mr. McClellan: I would like to enter into a series of questions and answers with the minister, mostly in the form of a conversation, in the hope of coming to a clearer understanding of some government programmes and by way of raising some of our concerns.

Just for the benefit of the Chair and the other members of the committee, I thought I would probably take about an hour, and that will probably use up the majority of the time that I wanted to spend on the first vote. I think we're pretty equally balanced at this point between the second and third parties with respect to the sharing of time and it's my intention to make sure that we share that time equally and equitably. I think that would be acceptable.

Mr. Chairman: What do you mean by "the first vote"—an item?

Mr. McClellan: Yes, on the social development policy, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Campbell: It's the first vote.

Mr. McClellan: Let me start off by asking—

Mr. Kerrio: Excuse me, is it reasonable to think that with that kind of allocation for the three groups we can get through this whole thing?

Mr. Chairman: Have you done a time study on this?

Mr. Kerrio: I am agreed. I think we should do a little allocation, but in a way that we are going to be able to go through the various votes.

Mr. McClellan: I don't foresee difficulties. We have a total of 12 hours, we've used two and a half. We have another two and a half today, we have the whole afternoon tomorrow and part of Monday, and possibly Tuesday. There's quite a bit of time available.

Mrs. Campbell: Mr. Chairman, under these rules, unfortunately the leadoff speaker for the Liberals will be engaged in private bills tomorrow afternoon, and that makes a problem, because I, too, particularly as a result of the statement which has just been made, wish to address this committee.

Mr. McClellan: Well, that leaves you from 4:45 until 6.

Mr. Chairman: Until 5:45.

Mrs. Campbell: Fine.

On vote 2601: Item 1:

Mr. McClellan: I wanted to open up with the question of the local children's services committees. I understand that they will be related to regional government in some way and I would like to know how. What is it you are talking about when you say that the local children's services committee will be located within the municipal government realm? Let me make some suggestions and you can tell me which ones are right and which ones are wrong. Are you talking about a special purpose body, or are you talking about existing social services committees? What exactly are you talking about?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We are talking about many possibilities that we would like to have the opportunity to discuss with local governments. We are suggesting that it should be a consultative approach, and there are many kinds of reporting relationships that could be developed, but we don't want to be in a

position of making that predetermination without the opportunity to speak to local governments.

I think you were in attendance when we made a statement to the PMLC that we would be meeting with the chairmen of local governments as quickly as possible, as well as with other levels of government.

Mr. McClellan: Would this mean that there could be a variation from regional municipality to regional municipality? For example, in Toronto it could be X and in Hamilton it could be Y, and in Ottawa it could be Z.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It might very well take that direction.

Mr. McClellan: You are that open to—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We are wide open to consultation. As you know, in Peel, I think that day at the PMLC, the suggestion was made that perhaps their social service committee, already in existence, would be the appropriate body to assume this responsibility. Certainly there was no discussion in that area, other than the suggestion that this was a possibility.

These are the kinds of things that we would like to have an opportunity to explore with the various levels of government.

Mr. McClellan: When you're talking about areas without a regional government structure, are you open to something like a community resource board? Let me back up and ask another question with respect to the role of the local children's services committees. I understand from your various statements that they will have at least two roles. One will be with respect to the intake placement and assessment of children within the region they have responsibility for. Is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: They would not have the role of providing the services themselves. They would have to contract for placement services and assessment services.

Mr. McClellan: Given in a particular community that a particular child has a particular problem and is in need of treatment what will the role of the local children's services committee be with respect to that individual child? Will they determine which of all the possibilities open to placement is the most appropriate?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That would be the role of that committee yes. They would determine the appropriate placement for the child.

Mr. McClellan: They will have funds to purchase service directly or through contract?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That's right.

Mr. McClellan: I understand. Will they have additional responsibility with respect to planning for the overall human services needs, at least as they relate to kids and families? Will they have a responsibility for developing a human services plan to meet needs, to fill gaps, to identify gaps in future needs and that kind of thing?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would certainly foresee that that would be a role they would take because it would be necessary. As you obviously are familiar with many of the programmes throughout the province, you know there are gaps in services in many areas. One would assume that this committee would be in a position to point out those gaps and to bring them to the attention of the ministry. There will be additional resources available for some of those areas.

Mr. McClellan: Here's where it breaks down in my mind, though it may not in yours. They will be making recommendations to the ministry for additional funding. Whom is the funding for? Is it funding for themselves to purchase or to develop additional services to meet unmet needs?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would see their requesting funding through the local government, perhaps for a group home that might be needed in that area, or perhaps assessment services that are not available to them. Those are various kinds of resources that children with problems might require and which might not be available to them.

Mr. McClellan: Do I understand that all funds, all financial resources for a given region for the purchase of treatment services will be funnelled through the local children's services committee?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That again is something that we really want to have an opportunity to discuss with local governments. At the same time we will be discussing the funding with them of course. Although we have indicated there will be no major shift in financial responsibilities, there still has to be discussion about the cost-sharing arrangements.

Mr. McClellan: Leaving aside the question of cost-sharing, if I understood what you just

said with respect to an individual child in need and the role of the local children's services committee in establishing the appropriate placement and paying for that placement, I take it from those remarks that all children within a given region would have their treatment need assigned by the local children's services committee, which would have the resources then to purchase the services to meet those needs.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That's ideally what we'd like to see happen.

Mr. McClellan: Let me be specific then and blunt. What happens then to the budget of, for example, the Children's Aid Societies? How are their fund allocations going to be tied into the work of the local children's services committees? Obviously if what you've said is going to happen, you can't also have a series of other independent child service agencies making their own independent placement and treatment decisions and independently spending treatment dollars. Is that not correct?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That's correct. And, of course, again, we recognize the fact that there will possibly be changes in the role of the Children's Aid Society. It may assume another quite different role. It would just have the authority for adoptions and children in need of protection—these areas. But it might assume a different role than it has at the moment.

Mr. McClellan: Well, how are you going to determine what its new role will be? I mean, this is as revolutionary a prospect as the original establishment of the Children's Aid Societies and what I want to know and what I think a lot of people want to know is what process have you established to assess the current role of the Children's Aid Societies and come to a determination about what their new role will be?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Again, and I don't like to keep repeating myself, we think that that is part of the whole consultative approach that we're taking. In many areas they might not have the advantage of a Children's Aid Society or some of the other resources. We would like to take that all into consideration, again, meeting the needs of a particular community before establishing the role of any particular agency. At this point—

Mr. McClellan: Surely there isn't any area in the province that isn't covered by a Children's Aid Society?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Well, I guess not really. No. But they do have different functions in different areas, depending on the resources of the particular community.

Mr. McClellan: The legislation that will be brought in to establish the local children's services committees then will have to take into account the current legislative responsibilities of the Children's Aid Societies. Is that not correct?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Of course, that would be anticipated in an omnibus bill, yes.

Mr. McClellan: But what I'm suggesting is that in view of the role you're defining for the local children's services committees in relation to the Children's Aid Societies, you can't establish the local children's services committees until you've brought in the omnibus bill, that is to say, you can't bring it in incrementally.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That's right, and I don't think that we've indicated that this is all going to happen overnight.

Mr. McClellan: It sure throws out of kilter the timetable that the minister has been expressing, since he's said that he hopes to have the local children's services committees in place by early 1978. He's made a very clear commitment with respect to that. But on the other hand, he's said that the omnibus children's legislation will not be available for many years.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Well, I hope it's not going to be that long.

Mr. McClellan: But surely—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Undoubtedly it will take some time. Yes.

Mr. McClellan: But you don't expect to have the omnibus children's legislation before the Legislature by the end of this year surely?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Oh, no. It wouldn't be that—

Mr. McClellan: Then why do you say that you can set up the local children's services committees by the end of this year?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: They could be set up, in consultation, in certain areas where they're prepared to go. I don't think that the minister indicated that every community across this

province would have a children's services committee in place by that time. There are communities where, because of the structure, they might be prepared to go much sooner than other areas.

Mr. McClellan: But if you are talking about such a fundamental revision of the role of the Children's Aid Societies, which is a role sanctioned by legislation, I don't see how you can set up any local children's services committee until you've brought in legislation, even if it's with respect to a particular community, dealing with a redefined set of child welfare responsibilities. Is that not true?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Of course they do have very well-defined responsibilities within the Children's Aid Societies. We're all aware of that. But again, as I'm pointing out to you, the role of the Children's Aid Society has not been clearly defined—it's again something about which we want to consult with them and with the community involved.

Mr. McClellan: How do you propose to vest wardship responsibilities with the local children's services committee?

[4:00]

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Again, we have considered that—whether or not in fact wardships might be vested with the children's committees. But, again, it remains part of the whole series of discussions with the various groups around the province.

Mr. McClellan: But is it not true that unless you change the child welfare legislation, you would have wardship vested both with Children's Aid Societies and with the local children's services committee at one and the same time and in the same community?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes, although there is a division of wardships and, of course, with the wardships under Correctional Services—with corrections coming into the new children's services—we would be assuming that role, which would in turn be part of the responsibility of the children's services committee.

Mr. McClellan: You have introduced what I was going to introduce, which is the third possible set of wardship responsibilities. Now, we will have wardship responsibilities under The Child Welfare Act, under the Ministry of Correctional Services and now under the local children's services committee simultaneously. Is that true?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: You mention a very obvious problem that we are faced with, yes.

Mr. McClellan: Yes, it's an obvious problem but you are the one who said that you were going to set up these committees in early 1978. I didn't say that, you said that.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I said we were going to begin to set up the committees.

Mr. McClellan: Oh, no.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I don't think we have at any time suggested that we were going to wave a wand and the committees were all going to fall into place across the province.

Mr. McClellan: With respect, the minister said exactly the equivalent to that when he said that the committees would be functioning by early 1978. I want to know—well, I guess we obviously do know—I would like a realistic timetable for implementation.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think that's an impossible question to answer. Obviously, with the complexities that you yourself have just addressed, it's impossible to put a time frame on it. It's something that we see a need for and a desire for but there is a tremendous consultative programme—

Mr. McClellan: I understand that. Then why did you put a time frame on it? Why didn't you just say that in the first place?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I assumed, hopefully, that we would have this all in place but, certainly, nothing as definite as to say that they would all be in place by 1978.

Mr. McClellan: Well, I don't have the documents readily at my fingertips but before the estimates are over, I will produce the—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I am sure that someone here has it—

Mr. McClellan: —the minister's statements to the effect that they would be in place in early 1978. I don't want to badger you on the point. I don't want to do that at all; that is not my intention. My intention was to come to an understanding of when we can expect to see the implementation of your reforms. That is all we are asking and we would like an honest and realistic statement of the implementation timetable. That is all we are asking.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It would have been quite simple, as I am sure you are aware, for the government to have imposed—

Mr. McClellan: It has nothing to do with—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Then it would have been quite easy to have gone about and done what governments so often do, make the decisions on behalf of local government. We decided to go the other route—

Mr. McClellan: Yes, I understand that.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: —and to involve them in the decision-making.

Mr. McClellan: Absolutely. I understand this utterly and clearly.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: One is not prepared to say that it will be done within such and such a time frame.

Mr. McClellan: All right, then. I suggest that you stop using, openly and publicly for public relations purposes, timetables which are patently unrealistic, as you are doing now. I appreciate and acknowledge the complexities of the process that we are all involved in. Let us try to come to an understanding of how long the development phase is in realistic terms, and when we can look forward to an implementation period that makes sense, not one that is obviously done for purposes of increased public relations benefits.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think public relations is a terribly important part of this whole programme because so much depends on the response and the co-operation that we are going to receive from governments and agencies across this province. It's just been brought to my attention that Mr. Norton indicated at the PMLC meeting that he would give a timetable by July 1, and that he also indicated that he'd withdrawn the January 1, 1978, date as the date that would be—

Mr. McClellan: He's withdrawn that?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes.

Mr. McClellan: That was just impulsive I suppose?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Or an attempt to get the programme under way.

Mr. McClellan: All right, let me ask another knotty question, spelled with a k. How does the local children's services committee relate to the juvenile and family court? At present the court has the ultimate authority with respect to protecting the rights of kids and with respect to directing kids into treatment. I understand from what you're suggesting that the local children's services committee will in some way supersede the decisions of the court, is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, not in that particular context. What we have suggested is that the family court judge would establish the finding and the local children's services committee would decide on the placement that was most appropriate in the interest of the child.

Mr. McClellan: How do you intend to remove from the family court the power they have to make placements? Or do you assume that Judge Holland's decision has done that for you?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I assume that we'll receive a great deal of co-operation from the family court judges across this province. We've had several opportunities to meet with them and to discuss this issue and I really don't see too much difficulty; I'll be surprised if there is. I think they're just as anxious to make sure that a child is placed within the community, unless it's a very unusual circumstance. I think they would be very happy to see it being accommodated through a children's services committee.

Mr. McClellan: So you'll be relying then on a kind of consensual co-operation with the courts to make that work.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Very much so. I think the success of the whole programme depends on the co-operation and the understanding of what everyone really is trying to do and that is meet the needs of each individual child.

I don't foresee many problems in that area. I think once everyone understands exactly what the children's services committees are intended to do, what their function is, what the other agencies who are providing services in the community are prepared to do, and the courts and the local government of course, that that co-operation certainly will be forthcoming. It's just going to take time to develop the whole programme.

Mr. McClellan: Okay, let me finally ask about the funding arrangements. Is this intended to be a cost-sharing arrangement or a more generous arrangement than the traditional provincial-municipal arrangements?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We expect it to be a cost-sharing arrangement.

Mr. McClellan: Do you have some suggestions about what the ratios would be?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We've had several suggestions from different municipalities as a result of the meeting at the PMLC, but

certainly nothing definite has been considered at all.

Mr. McClellan: Can I ask you what the gist of the municipal suggestions might be?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Usually what other cost-sharing arrangements are.

Mr. McClellan: Eighty-twenty?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes, it's a possibility but certainly nothing definite. It's just been a point of discussion with some of the municipal people.

Mr. McClellan: You don't anticipate difficulties with an 80-20 formula?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: One is never sure when you can anticipate difficulties. No, I really don't think so at this time.

Mr. McClellan: Wouldn't you agree that the traditional 80-20 formula has been a real barrier to the development of the growth of adequate family support services across the province—that historically in this province municipalities have been enormously reluctant to place the extra burden of social services, even if it's at 20 per cent on the property tax? Wouldn't you agree that much of the traditional reluctance and even hostility on the part of municipalities to move into the human services field has been because of the difficulties that it represents to municipal budgeting?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think there's quite a decided change in that historical thinking of the past. I find that more and more municipal governments want to be involved in the provisions of social services. As a matter of fact, we do have a programme under way at the moment, or it will be under way very soon, in Kitchener-Waterloo, a human services approach to the local community deciding on the social services along with the health services that are required for the community. I think more and more local governments want to be involved in the decision-making as to the social services within their own communities.

Mr. McClellan: Your experience, I suppose, conflicts with mine. For example, when you look at visiting homemakers' services, I attribute the failure of this province to develop an adequate network of visiting homemakers' services across the province to the failure of existing funding arrangements, pure and simple. Nowhere in this province, not in a single community is there an

adequate array or supply of visiting homemakers' services. Toronto has obviously the best developed system. Toronto made some real progress in 1975 in extending visiting homemakers' services only to see those gains completely wiped out by the provincial constraints and the traditional constraints.

If you're serious—let me suggest to you, rather than to question you—if you're serious about developing an adequate network of non-institutional services, if you're serious about saying that responsibility has to rest with the family, and that's government policy, and it's government policy to provide those services that make that possible to strengthen families and provide support to families, then you're going to have to change the funding arrangements. You may not want to change the funding arrangements with respect to residential or institutional services. That is to say, you may not. I'm not suggesting that would be our policy, but I'm trying to operate within the constraints of your policy.

Even if you continue the traditional cost-sharing within custodial services, surely it makes sense to you, by way of encouragement, by way of incentives, by way of making it possible to develop quickly the whole array of family support services that are seen as the essential component of government policy, then it makes sense to provide 100 per cent funding by way of an incentive, because the services are simply so poorly developed across the province.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Of course I take exception to that.

Mr. McClellan: The interministerial report says so. You just have to turn to the pages where it says it.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think what it points out is that they're fragmented.

Mr. McClellan: It says: "They're poorly developed in many Ontario communities and not developed at all in most."

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No.

Mr. McClellan: That's what it says. That's what your own senior officials are telling you.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think that we have, in the province, an excellent system of services. I think the problem has been that they have not been co-ordinated.

To get back to your other question, I feel very strongly that a community should have an interest in the services provided by providing some of the costs. I think it's

important that they do have participation in the cost sharing.

Mr. McClellan: The historical reality suggests otherwise in this province and I think that deep down you know it. Your own officials have pointed this out in the interministerial report. Unless you're prepared to adopt some different policies with respect to family support services we're not going to see them developed in this province. It boils down to that.

[4:15]

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think we have already indicated we are prepared to make resources available in those areas of the province where there is an inadequate supply of resources.

Mr. McClellan: That's most of Ontario.

Mrs. Campbell: That's the whole province.

Mr. McClellan: That's right; that's everywhere. I suggest to you that you're going to have to do exactly the same thing—and with much better results, let me hasten to add—as you did with your day-care expansion programme; that is to say, make money available at 100 per cent. And let us not use that as an example of a successful programme.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Of course, we'd never agreed on that either, because your philosophy is quite different than mine; so perhaps we would just waste time debating that particular issue.

Mr. McClellan: Let's not open that one up at this particular time.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, please let's not.

Mr. McClellan: But I suggest to you, and I'm quite serious, that if you want to develop family support services, you're going to have to bring in additional incentives. At this point in time, you can't go to municipalities and say, "Look, you have some new responsibilities; here they are, and it's going to cost you so much more money." People are cutting back on what exists now; they're not going to pick up additional responsibilities. It's as simple as that.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Of course, we don't intend going to municipalities and saying exactly what you've just suggested, that "you're going to have to do this"—

Mr. McClellan: Sure. So you'll go to them and say, "Would you like to do this?"

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, we would say—

Mr. McClellan: And: "Here's what it's going to cost you." They'll say, "Get lost."

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We would say to them, "You have a responsibility for the children in your community, for the families in your community."

Mr. McClellan: You'll appeal to their high moral sensitivities.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I hope so.

Mr. McClellan: They will still tell you to get lost.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Perhaps I'm not as cynical as you are in that area.

Mr. McClellan: I don't think that's being cynical at all. I think that speaks to the kinds of very real pressures that elected municipal officials face, the very real pressures that they experience from their electorate; and it speaks to the inequity of trying to run major social programmes on a regressive tax base. That's what it boils down to.

It's inherently unfair to require that essential human services be financed from a regressive tax base. People understand that—everybody's constituents understand that it's unfair to do it; and, of course, they oppose it because they know it's unfair. As long as that inequity remains as the basis of funding these kinds of programmes, there will be resistance and hostility. It's guaranteed, it's inevitable; it's structured right into the thing. Until those programmes are funded on the basis of progressive taxation, you are going to have enormous difficulty in securing implementation.

We may just agree to disagree and we will watch things unfold but without too much in the way of optimism on our part here, because we have seen the same problem for many years; and it will be continued and entrenched.

Let me move on to a couple of other things. I don't have a preamble to this question: What age of kids are you talking about when you're talking about your new deal for children's services? What age of kid will the local children's services committee be responsible to assume responsibility for? Age 16 or 18?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: As you know, the federal legislation on the young offender has posed certain problems as to what the maximum age should be whether it should be 16 or 18. It's being discussed at the moment within the justice policy field. I haven't had an opportunity to see their response to the federal

paper; so it's debatable at the moment whether it would in fact be 16 or 18.

Mr. McClellan: What is Ontario's position?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We haven't a position until I hear from the justice policy field.

Mr. McClellan: Do you know if they've reached a decision?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, I don't.

Mr. McClellan: Perhaps you could find out before the conclusion of the estimates and report back progress in coming to a decision so that we know at least what Ontario would like to see happen and what Ontario's position is in this debate?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I will check with the justice policy field to see if that is available.

Mr. McClellan: The third area I wanted to ask about has to do with children currently in training school. I think I understand what structures you've established to deal with the question of removing section 8 children from training school and finding adequate placement for them. I want to ask about section 9 children. Do you know how many section 9 children are currently in training schools?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, I do not.

Mr. McClellan: I think when you made the announcement that you were repealing section 8, either in the announcement or in the course of the questioning, you expressed a concern about the numbers of section 9 children who were currently in training school. I assume you still have that concern.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, I didn't express particular concern because my mandate was to deal with the children who were there under section 8. At that point, they were still under the authority of the Minister of Correctional Services and I wasn't dealing with that issue at all. I might have said off the record or something that I was concerned.

Mr. McClellan: Are you concerned? Let me ask you now because I am concerned.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I am concerned about the need for any child to be in a training school system.

Mr. McClellan: I have a number of transcripts of cases of children who have come before the family court under section 9 and have had absolutely explicit assessments and recommendations from the agencies that had been responsible for them that under no circumstances should these kids be sent to train-

ing schools, that what they need is a different kind of placement with a treatment emphasis. Yet because of the unavailability of treatment facilities at a given point in time, they have been sent to training school via Oakville.

Don't you think there needs to be some kind of case audit of children who are in training school under section 9, a case-by-case review of the treatment needs of those kids?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would certainly hope that that would be a role that the new division of children's services would undertake.

Mr. McClellan: Since you have already established a series of mechanisms for trying to deal with section 8 children, don't you think it would be useful to extend that to section 9 children and attempt to do a case audit and review the appropriateness of the training school placements, kid by kid?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: You will recall I did make a commitment that those children who were presently in training schools under section 8 would be removed as quickly as possible and placed in the community.

Mr. McClellan: Yes.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We did, however, indicate that it would not be in the best interest to remove some children who were in particular programmes—and I don't mean those who were incarcerated in training schools, but those in correctional group homes and other facilities. In no way would we attempt to remove them if the programme seemed to be in their best interests.

We did establish a committee to deal with very difficult and hard-to-place young people. That committee has found placements for several children. They are still working and attempting to meet the needs of several others. These children in most instances really are disturbed and it is very difficult to find suitable placement for them. But I would hope at the conclusion of the placement of those particular difficult children who had been in under section 8 that indeed we would look at the others who are in our training school system.

Mr. McClellan: You have about 37 section 8 children now that you are concerned about?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: About 37. Not all of those are difficult to place. Some of them are in programmes that are appropriate for the moment.

Mr. McClellan: Are you saying then that you will do a case audit of section 9 children and review the appropriateness of the training school placements?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would think that that would be a very appropriate action to take, yes.

Mr. McClellan: Can we have a commitment? I'm speaking on the basis of knowledge of cases. I don't want to take the time of the committee to bring out the files and the transcripts and read the recommendations of professional agency staff and of court clinics and all that, but you know that it happens and that it's a major tragedy when it happens.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It is.

Mr. McClellan: There are kids in training school under section 9 who shouldn't be there, and while you're going through this process now with the section 8 kids, it's a good opportunity to extend it and try to come up with more adequate placement facilities for the section 9 kids.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Fortunately, over the last few years the numbers of young people who have been committed under section 9 wardships have been diminishing and, of course, the whole direction of the new policy was to monitor and evaluate those children who are in training schools under our new policy. So it is an ongoing commitment that we are prepared to make.

Mr. McClellan: Maybe I do have to trot out the cases then. I'll do that later in the estimates.

Just a final thing while we're talking about section 8, I haven't had a chance to confirm it, but I was told yesterday by somebody in the Ministry of Correctional Services that Judge Docherty in Kingston sentenced a child to training school under section 8.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: When was this?

Mr. McClellan: I believe it was Friday this is alleged to have happened. I understand why you're shaking your head, because it's illegal.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It is illegal.

Mr. McClellan: Yes. Would you mind investigating that and reporting back to us tomorrow?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes, right away.

Mr. McClellan: I believe it was last Friday. I was told this by an official in

the Ministry of Correctional Services yesterday at a youth services conference and I haven't had time to confirm it, so I thought I would ask you to confirm it.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'd be very pleased to. I hope it's incorrect.

Mr. McClellan: I do too. Let me ask you about Judge Holland's decision, the decision of the Supreme Court that has either voided the placement of children in group homes under a judicial order under The Juvenile Delinquents Act, and if it hasn't voided it, it's certainly opened all of those hundreds of placements open to case-by-case litigation.

We had some discussion of that in the House last week. You may recall I suggested to the ministry that by way of preventing litigation from municipalities fighting maintenance orders, you should immediately increase your offer from 50 per cent to 100 per cent. Are you aware that Metro social services is continuing its litigation?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, I'm not.

Mr. McClellan: They were in court yesterday and again today, at least with respect to one case that I know of, the child who was in the care of Youth Sphere. The child is in a group home. There's nowhere else that this child can go. The child can't go home to her family. The only alternative is a temporary placement in Youth Sphere.

Let me just tell you what the arrangement was. There had been a succession of unsuccessful Children's Aid Society placements. It's another one of those cases of a 15-year-old kid turning 16 and the CAS wouldn't put him under wardship. Youth Sphere arranged a community placement with supervision and service and support to the aunt. The aunt got sick and they went back to court and the judge arranged for the child to go temporarily into the Youth Sphere group home until the aunt was well and the community placement can be restored.

[4:30]

Metro social services appeared before Judge Abella yesterday and contended that it would not pay the maintenance costs of service or the group home costs, the per diem, from April 13 on. So that placement is in jeopardy. The only thing that is keeping the thing together is that the family court judge who originally assigned the child to Youth Sphere is away on holiday until May 13, and only that judge can

order her removed from the group home. The situation is that the child is still in the group home, fortunately, but Youth Sphere is being expected to absorb the cost as a loss. So we have the idiotic prospect of either Youth Sphere going broke as a result of this situation or, if the original judge had been there, he would have been obliged to terminate the placement and that kid would have been stranded in limbo.

I understand, regardless of Mr. Norton's hopes to the contrary, that Metro social services is going ahead with litigation, case by case. As these things come up in court, they will contest them; and they have the prospect of all of these placements breaking down. You don't have the luxury of sitting around waiting for this to happen. I understand it is painful in budget terms, but it is not the municipality's fault that this happened in the first place, and they shouldn't bear the brunt of it. Above all, the kids shouldn't bear the brunt of it.

I am going to say again, as strongly as I can, that you should raise your offer to 100 per cent and pick up these costs. Let's not fight and haggle about these dollar costs at the expense of kids who are in group home care right now, because that is what is going on and that is what is going to go on. Let me tell you, if Metro social services are playing this game, other municipalities are going to be in it with a vengeance.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think the minister did indicate to you that he was going to be consulting with the Attorney General as to the implications of this decision.

Mr. McClellan: We know what the implications are. He doesn't have to consult with the Attorney General. I told you what the implications are. The implications are what was going on in Judge Abella's court this morning and yesterday. That is what the implications are.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think the minister feels that he needs a little advice in that area as to just how the province should proceed.

Mr. McClellan: He is going to have to get it quickly and he is going to have to change his policy quickly. We are not talking about an academic exercise. We are talking about the stability of group home placements for troubled kids—that is what we are talking about—and hundreds of kids. The possibility is there, every time there is a court review of one of these placements, that the municipi-

pality can come in and say, "We are not obliged to pay the cost of maintenance because of Judge Holland's decision"; that will stand and the placement will fall apart. It is as simple as that.

Let me ask you something. When you made your offer to the municipalities to pick up 50 per cent of the cost of court-ordered maintenance costs under The Juvenile Delinquents Act, was that cost shared under the Canada Assistance Plan?

Dr. Wright: It is expected that it might be cost-sharable, but this has not yet been established.

Mr. McClellan: In other words, the net cost to the province of Ontario is zero?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That is not really true. Our costs were \$2.7 million, I think, to pick up the 50 per cent of all the costs across the province.

Mr. McClellan: If it is 50 per cent cost-shared, what is the provincial share?

Dr. Wright: I am sorry; I was distracted. I thought, when you mentioned the \$2.6 million, that the question was about the employment programme for services to seniors.

Mr. McClellan: No. It was the announcement the government made at PMLC last week that it was going to pick up 50 per cent of the costs that had been borne by municipalities in paying for court-ordered group home placements. Is that cost sharable?

Dr. Wright: Again I think the answer is that it is not yet known.

Mr. McClellan: But your anticipation is that it would be?

Dr. Wright: I'm not assured that it would be. It think there are reasons to believe it may not be cost-sharable. Particularly in anticipation of the new social services Act, the federal government—

Mr. McClellan: Under the current Canada Assistance Plan.

Dr. Wright: No, but the federal government has been reluctant to extend authorizations under the present CAP.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I will attempt to get a clarification of that.

Mr. McClellan: I would really like to know because it sounds to me—and again I

may be unnecessarily bilious and surly—like the old con game of Ontario picking up 50-cent dollars and expecting the municipalities to pay their share but not picking up a cent itself. I'd be delighted to be shown to be wrong on this. I genuinely would be.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'll attempt to do that.

Mr. McClellan: Nevertheless, I go back to my original contention, as strongly as I can suggest, that you move quickly to pick up 100 per cent of the costs on your offer to municipalities in order to protect and stabilize the group home placements that are currently in jeopardy. I'd ask that you really think seriously about that, perhaps not to respond right now but to take it under consideration and investigate the extent of the litigation that currently seems to be under way.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It seems to be just in the Metro Toronto area at the moment.

Mr. McClellan: If you think the regional municipality of Peel isn't going to go on an orgy of litigation, you are very much mistaken.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I said "at the moment."

Mr. McClellan: How many days do you want to wait? How many placements do you want to fall part? Surely one placement falling apart is too many. That's what will happen. Not every judge is away on holiday.

Let me finish off by asking you about a different but related subject. It concerns government policy with respect to providing services to the learning disabled. We're aware of the number of kids who end up in the correctional system or in the child welfare system because of the problems, pressures and difficulties they've experienced as a result of learning difficulties, and still in 1977 we don't have an adequate set of government programmes and policies with respect to the learning disabled.

There's a project in my own riding, Project STEPS which provides a rehabilitative service to older kids between the ages of 18 to 22. The only way, as you know, they can get funding is from vocational rehab. Vocational rehab refuses to say as a matter of policy that it's responsible for funding this kind of service. The position of the Ministry of Community and Social Services is that the responsibility rests with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education plays the same kind of game. Services

like Project STEPS are teetering on the brink of collapse continuously and permanently.

Project STEPS' board of directors notified the minister of their intention to resign in February and were prevailed upon to continue the programme until June. Vocational rehab was cajoled into giving them an additional four placements so that they could survive until June and not collapse. Really this kind of nonsense has got to stop.

We've been promised and I've been promised in correspondence recently by the Minister of Community and Social Services (Mr. Norton) that his colleague, the Minister of Education (Mr. Wells), is shortly going to make an announcement with respect to brave new government initiatives. When can we expect that? How much longer do the parents of learning disabled kids have to send their children to the United States at their own expense? How much longer do services that are trying to give rehabilitative help to the learning disabled have to teeter on the brink of bankruptcy and collapse twice a year? How much longer is it going to be before government in this province states that children with learning disabilities have the same rights as every other kid in this province to a complete educational service?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm very happy to relay to you that it is the intention of this government to release a statement very soon to take effect September 1977 which will provide further details regarding the expectations of school boards and the availability of support services of a non-educational nature. The staffs of the Ministries of Community and Social Services and Education are presently meeting to design ways and means of providing a continuum of provincially-based care, treatment and educational services to learning disabled students.

The education of children with learning disabilities is viewed to be the responsibility of the school boards of this province. The non-educational aspects of treatment or care will be made available, based on demonstrated need, within the child's local community wherever possible and we anticipate that statement will be made soon.

Mr. McClellan: Just so I can understand, will that require school boards to provide services?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That will probably be part of the statement that the minister will be making.

Mr. Grande: As long as the school boards pay it, you can make the policy and you know that it's empty words and empty policy.

Mr. McClellan: When will the minister make this? Because I've been promised this statement three or four times since I was elected. Is it going to be within a week or two?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I can't say. All I can say is, I'm just as hopeful as you are that it will be very soon.

Mr. McClellan: Are you saying that there will be a programme in place by September 1977?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It will be effective or should be in place by September 1977, yes.

Mr. McClellan: Okay. We'll wait for it then, and see what happens.

Mrs. Campbell: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to continue somewhat in the same vein. In view of the chaos that now appears to exist as a result of the placements by judges of children into group homes with cost to the municipality, would the minister now not feel that her ministry did not adequately consider the implications which were, of course, the reason for the delay in implementing the retraction of section 8 placements? What more implications could there be to create chaos than what we have seen with Metro Toronto and with Peel? Why would her ministry not feel they should have considered the possibility of this kind of reaction from municipalities? And what consultative process was there with the municipalities in this case?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: There was a great deal of consultative approach with the court systems, the agencies.

Mrs. Campbell: But not the municipalities that would have to pick up the tab.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: But that has been a new development that occurred that we were not really prepared for.

Mrs. Campbell: But could you not have realized that you were paying 100 per cent of the placements of children in training schools under section 8 and that you would not be paying that kind of money for placements in court-ordered group homes? Did you not know that? Did you not have any experience of that through all the years the family court has been in existence?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Obviously we weren't aware to the extent that it was going to be abused.

[4:45]

Mrs. Campbell: May I say that I am terribly frightened at what I hear about your proposed youth committees. I have the horrible feeling that once again you have made a very nice statement, one which people welcome as a step forward. Yet, I do not find in your responses anything other than a very fuzzy overview of what, surely, has to be considered. Please, I understand the consultative process; I understand what you mean. But let me try to develop what is coming out of this, as I see it, because my concern—believe it or not—is for these children we are talking about, and not to posture here. It really isn't to posture.

We have now found that we will possibly have two groups dealing with wardship. We don't know. Maybe we will. Is the minister aware that this further complicates the situation? The court is, perhaps, going to have some basic finding to make; but this, if I can demonstrate it by a case, is to me an over-simplification. I would not like us to be trapped again. For example, at the present time in the courts, a judge may be dealing with a matter of wardship. While that very case is being heard in the family court, there can be a parallel case, in a matter of custody, going on in another court. I think you have to come to grips with that kind of situation for your committees and/or your Children's Aid.

What happens there is—and I have had the experience—the judge who is hearing the wardship case is suddenly faced with a custody order from another court. I happened to be the judge in question and I don't think I have been overruled since. I had to find that in view of the fact that the circumstances relating to the wardship were now completely different as a result of the custody, the wardship application could no longer be pursued, and that if that child were to have any hearing on wardship, then it would have to be begun de nova with the new circumstances which arose as a result of a placement by another court.

I would have hoped that someone would have addressed himself or herself to this very fundamental problem—and I think it lies with the Attorney General—but not even to have considered it or discussed it, I suggest is going to create very real problems, particularly if you have two groups dealing with wardship.

Another matter that concerns: has any consideration been given to a form of wardship akin to Crown wardship? Again, one of the things I had to face was the case of a child, very badly damaged psychologically and also mentally retarded, who should never

have had any finding made. But after several months of trying to find the proper way to deal with that child, and recognizing that the home base was the last place that child should ever be, that child had to be sent to a training school for two days in order to establish the ultimate Crown wardship, which could presumably carry on after that child was released.

That kind of procedure, I can tell you, is very distressing to a judge. It shouldn't be necessary to enable a child to have an ongoing supervision, and ongoing protection, following the determination of the treatment and determination of the placement—in this case it happened to be Whitby—as the proper place.

That took months to try to work through in order to get the kind of a placement that would be for the ultimate good of the child. I wonder if any discussion has been held with anybody on the whole aspect of a kind of wardship which can continue in such cases on an ongoing basis, where the government itself would have some continuing responsibility. In a case of that kind it could not be, and everyone agreed—the Children's Aid and the Ministry of Health—that this particular child needed Crown wardship. What an archaic way to establish it. How do you propose that the children would get to the youth committee?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: The children from the court?

Mrs. Campbell: Do they go from the court?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Those children who would be before a court of course would be referred from the court.

Mrs. Campbell: But what is the procedure? If you have a child in trouble—not with the law, but in trouble—what is the procedure by which this child gets to the committee? Is it via the Children's Aid Society which has the protection responsibility or has the committee the right to do what Children's Aid Societies, at least in Toronto, would have loved to be able to do, that is, to understand the problem in advance of the alarm siren going off? Is there going to be a better procedure? I don't know how you proceed in your discussions with the municipalities, but I have always found if I wanted to proceed to discuss something with somebody at least I had some kind of suggested procedures against which they could assess the position. Is there anything to indicate how this will be done?

We've talked about the children in conflict and we've talked about the top levels. What about the lower levels of age? What ages are we talking about in the lower levels? In wardship, of course, it could be an infant. But for other purposes what is it?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would consider that it might also be an infant in these instances that would be referred for a placement, proper assessment.

Mrs. Campbell: I see. You are aware, I suppose, that many of the children who get into the courts get there via the police and Children's Aid, even though they are not really deemed at an age when they could legally have committed an offence. I'm concerned about the kinds of gaps that there can be under the federal suggestions. I'm thinking of children of seven who have been brought into the courts because there was no other procedure, basically, who are troubled and disturbed. Would you have those children taken to this committee, or to this group, or how would this work?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would assume the educational authorities, or the local community clinics, or any agency operating within that particular community, would avail themselves of the possibility of directing the child through the children's services committee.

Mrs. Campbell: Often, these children are too young for anyone to approach that kind of an assessment. Let's take a seven-year-old. A seven-year-old has been acting up. Whose responsibility is it to get this child into the hands of this group?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would assume that if the child was seven he would be in the educational system. I would also assume that if he were acting out and causing problems within the system, it would be brought to the attention of the parents or local people who are responsible, and in turn, brought to the attention of the children's services committee where an assessment would be made and a placement in the best interests of the child provided. It might not necessarily mean a placement in any agency or mental health clinic or children's mental health facility. It might mean some supportive services for the family to keep the child at home, which I would hope would be the avenue first explored.

Mrs. Campbell: You are aware that this doesn't happen?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm hoping it will happen once we get the children's services committee into place.

Mrs. Campbell: Are you thinking in terms, for instance, of one for Metropolitan Toronto?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We have discussed that—the advisability of having one for such a large urban area. Perhaps it's as well to start with one and to evaluate, after it's been in operation for some time. Perhaps it would have to be broken down into regions in Metropolitan Toronto. But I think that's something we would have to try before we could be sure we were going in the right direction. I think it's a very large area, for one.

Mrs. Campbell: May I suggest to you that one of the things on which I'm very critical at the moment of the federal government approach is their suggestion that children should be 12 before they're brought into the courts. I'm not critical philosophically at all, but what is frightening me terribly is the fact that children under that age, at least, sometimes are caught into a system where they can—certainly in Toronto—have the advantage of the clinic and get help. I had hoped this committee would have been thought through to the point at least where we would be looking at some procedures.

You must know there are great dichotomies in the school system about getting children into any kind of a—even a dialogue with parents about children that are having problems. Often these children don't have the problems in the schools, or don't act out in the schools. They may be, as I have seen, very passive in the school system and act out when they get outside of it.

[5:00]

If we're simply going to put in place something similar to the Children's Aid Society and call it by a new name or something, and perhaps, in turn, by opting out of the Children's Aid funding by the province, putting more pressure on the municipalities than they already have, I am deeply frightened by this announcement, which I believe ought at least to have had some for-instances, some suggestions as to topics of conversation with municipalities.

The minister has expressed the feeling that municipalities should take responsibility for those within their jurisdiction. When does she think it will start? She knows, and I know, that there are areas of this province which do not have group homes, and yet she speaks

about the advisability of children remaining in their own community. I think it's great to philosophize but I think we have to take the reality into consideration. When we know that is a fact of life—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Could I respond to that?

Mrs. Campbell: Yes, surely.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think one of the reasons—and it certainly has been brought to my attention—that many municipalities have objected to group homes is that up until now we have had many different ministries and agencies coming into a community and sort of imposing group homes without any kind of consultation on what it would mean to the local recreational programme, the local educational system and all the other resources of a community.

I think the resentment was borne out by the fact that many of these group homes were providing care for children who were not residents of that particular community but were from just any other community where the homes were not provided. I think that resentment was built upon the recognition that they indeed were providing for children in communities where they had not provided the resource.

With the direction that we hope to go, where children must be looked after in their own communities, I certainly feel that we will find less resistance by local communities in providing group homes and the other resources that are required.

Mrs. Campbell: May I just point out a fact of life? So many of the placements from Peel—and we did discuss Peel yesterday—are in Toronto. I don't think that is an answer, with respect. I don't think Peel has even been looking after them in the ones that they may have. I am not too familiar with them, but I don't think there is any doubt in the world that they have not been looking after children out of their municipality; they have been pretty well shifting them out to Toronto.

When you talk about the attitudes of municipalities and their responsibility for looking after their own, are we really going back to those days when we used to have to investigate where a child was born when there were charge-backs to the municipality because the child moved? I thought we moved progressively out of that kind of philosophy.

But may I point out to you that if you proceed in the way you are going, I say with respect, as I see it—and, of course, I could be wrong—that you are perhaps inviting municipalities such as Toronto to embark

upon that kind of philosophy, because the experience in Toronto over a long period of time, before Metro, was that it had rather sophisticated social services compared with other parts—of Canada, let's put it, so I don't get into any kind of problems with my colleagues in the rest of Ontario—and we were inundated by people from other parts who were looking for some assistance because they didn't have it at home.

I think you can break it down to mean that that could happen, unless you have a programme which is across the province and in place. I don't think I need to be a genius to point out that it is that kind of implication which ought to be studied in your ministry. I'm truly very frightened and very depressed at what has come out of discussions about these proposed committees, because I really honestly see it—as I said before—as very akin to so many other beautiful statements of government, which have been full of sound and fury signifying precisely nothing. I don't want that to happen where children are concerned. They have been abused enough.

I had hoped that the minister, through her ministry—since it is the policy secretariat which is, at least, supposed to have some influence in policy development, if no other thing—that she would have developed, before this goes much further, some step by step suggestions for discussion with the municipalities. Of course, the fact is that you—with the greatest respect—are going to have to put some of this together fairly soon because of the budgeting processes of municipalities. And if you haven't, at least, got it into a position where you can get some consensus, or something in the way of dialogue with some kind of precision, you may be coming down with decisions at a time when municipalities are going to have to say: "We can't do it. Our mill rate is fixed. You'll have to wait another year." All of this is a matter of very important timing.

I would like to touch on one of the things I'd like a direct answer to, if I could get it. We would all like to see children not in need of placements, in group homes or any place else. That is an ideal to which, I think, everyone in this room would work. But meanwhile we have group homes. Yesterday, we discussed the situation with Children's Aid Societies in Peel. I would invite the minister's reaction to these statements, if I may.

During the course of our research—it has been extensive, and with very limited resources we have been able to understand implications—we investigated the situation in

Peel. We have met at least two children, and heard of several others, who have appeared before the Peel family court, who have been sent to Browndale for assessment and were subsequently placed in Viking Homes. This disturbed us immensely. May I explain why?

Viking at one time was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Browndale International. When it achieved its independence, it undertook to pay Browndale five per cent of its revenue over a five-year period. One press report suggested that this netted Browndale somewhere in the range of \$200 a day. In addition, Browndale undertook to make available to Viking personnel services of several senior persons in their organization, including one Dr. Otto Weininger.

A question arose in our minds as to whether or not an organization performing assessments on children should benefit financially from the placement of those children in a residential setting. We understand these assessments were performed not by trained psychologists, but by students seeking PhDs in education. The children with whom we discussed the matter stated they had never met the psychologist in question, although he, along with the PhDs, signed the psychological assessments.

When we raised the matter, both in the Legislature and in the press, there were rather curious explanations. Dr. Weininger, for one, is alleged to have said he was involved with the Peel court through OISE, where he is a professor, and not Browndale. He further went on to state it was inaccurate to say Browndale is involved in these court assessments. In actual fact, the assessment clinic is referred to throughout the court transcripts that we had seen as the Browndale clinic, and parents of one of the children we interviewed made available to us a copy of their child's assessment, which was on Browndale stationery.

We are not alleging any wrongdoing or criminality. We simply raise questions about the ethics and the appropriateness of such assessment procedures. We strongly feel anyone performing any assessments of children should not have a financial interest in the subsequent placement of children in a treatment programme?

I wonder if the minister could comment on that position?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We feel just as strongly, and that was the rationale behind the children's services committee determining where the assessment should be done and where the

placement should be without being directly involved in providing either the assessment or the placement—contracting out for the placement, but also establishing the assessment and determining who would be providing that.

Mrs. Campbell: I see. So the committee would determine who would do the assessment?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: That's right.

Mrs. Campbell: Could the same thing not happen there?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I don't think so, because I would assume that the makeup of the committee would make that impossible.

Mrs. Campbell: May I ask the minister to follow through on that? I am not clear as to how that could be.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: The committee members, when a child is brought to them, would determine where the assessment would be, who would provide the assessment. Based on the assessment, then they would decide where the child should be placed. Certainly it would not be done in conjunction with where the assessment had taken place. I think all of the concerns you have expressed about this very thing happening would be circumvented by this children's services committee.

Mrs. Campbell: Would they have attached to them staff for this purpose?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Again, that is sort of questionable, depending on the kinds of resources that are available in some communities. It well might be if, in fact, it was decided that the social services department of a particular community were the providers of this particular children's services committee. If it were attached to the children's services committee perhaps there might be staff then available that they could contract or could avail themselves of for assessment services.

[5:15]

Mrs. Campbell: Are their assessment services of this nature in our cities, in our social services department?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I thought there was with the Metro Toronto social services.

Mrs. Campbell: For the assessment of children?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm not sure about that. Maybe someone else knows.

Mrs. Campbell: Perhaps I could find out. I hadn't heard. It could very well be, and that I'm just in error.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm not certain.

Mrs. Campbell: The second matter we would like to draw your attention to is the question of who exactly is looking after the interests of those children placed by the courts in children's boarding homes without the involvement of the Children's Aid Society?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm sorry.

Mrs. Campbell: Could we know who is looking after the interests of those children placed in children's boarding homes without the involvement of the Children's Aid Society? May I say we recognize that the Children's Aid Society does supervise to some extent children placed there through their involvement; but where it is a direct court placement who is really looking after the interests of those children?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I assume if it's to a particular group home then it has a certain responsibility for a reporting relationship to the judge who has made that placement. No? You've had more experience than I have, certainly. I would have assumed there would be a reporting relationship.

Mrs. Campbell: Are you not aware that there is absolutely no accountability when a child goes into the home, that no progress report is necessary and that there isn't even a necessary accountability when the child leaves? Are you aware that there are children who have stated they were invited to remain in a group home—these are disturbed children—on the understanding that if they stay there long enough they could become staff? Are you aware of that?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I have run into staff who've informed me that they have at one point or another been part of the system.

Mr. Bullbrook: It sounds like the Legislature.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes, it does.

Mrs. Campbell: In your opinion, the judge should have the ongoing supervision of these children in group homes?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm not saying that. I'm saying I thought that that had been so. I had

taken for granted that they did have some responsibility in the past. I'm hoping with the new direction we're going that the children's services committee would be the people who would be responsible, who would be monitoring and evaluating the services and the placement of that child to make sure it continued to be in the child's best interest.

Mrs. Campbell: In view of the fact you haven't yet accorded to the municipalities the right to go into these homes for which they've been up until now paying 100 per cent, would you not think it might be an idea and a step forward at least to ensure that they could have some supervisory powers until we get the committees into place? We think the committees will take longer than 1977—that's the way I feel about it—and 1978. I really am depressed. I tell you I am.

What about the unlicensed boarding homes? Why do you think that no one has any answer as to whether they're safe from the point of view of fire or health or building regulations? As you are aware, I've asked the minister responsible on more than one occasion and he had to answer that he didn't know, but if I knew of any dangerous ones please to let him know. It seems to me it's a strange way to run a children's programme.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would assume that again the Children's Aid Societies have placed a great many children in unlicensed homes in the hope that the children were being placed in a family-like setting and in homes—I have many in my riding that have been brought to my attention—where, in terms of fire protection in the normal sense of a family being protected, they assumed the children would receive the same kind of protection in those homes. I imagine the Children's Aid Societies might have been placed in the position of having a great deal of difficulty in finding foster homes and placements for children, and that to impose a lot of regulations and red tape might have been very discouraging for many foster home placements.

Mrs. Campbell: I'm sorry, I wasn't speaking of foster homes, I was speaking of unlicensed children's boarding homes; and I was not speaking of those which have any involvement with Children's Aid. I am terrified when I hear a minister stand up in the House and say that he doesn't know how many may be unsafe from the point of

view of fire, health or building regulations; and, of course, you are aware of the fact that your own regulations haven't been followed.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think the minister had indicated to you, I believe it was in the House, that they have tightened up all those regulations as far as fire safety is concerned in those homes, because it all has to be passed by local fire people now as well as by the regulations set down by the provincial government. They must meet those regulations or they just will not continue to operate.

Mrs. Campbell: In this case in point, where the boy lost his life—and I am not suggesting that he lost it as a result of the non-compliance with the government's own regulations, but there is no doubt that your own regulations were not complied with. Months later, we are still not able to get that very simple information; and I think it is shocking if we have this much concern for children, that we simply don't know what the situation is.

I will leave that. I would like to point out briefly to the minister that the question of reports and the rest adopted by the Legislature came about as a result of the Morrow committee. The Morrow committee at no time thought or stated—in fact, they were quite emphatic the other way; they believed there had to be cabinet confidentiality. But what is happening in this ministry, to the detriment of its reputation I may say, is that everything seems to become a matter of cabinet confidentiality.

We have some councils, for example, that hold open meetings. Others are closed. I don't think the matter of the councils, for example, and their reporting should be regarded as cabinet confidentiality. I have to say to you if you can't get any reports out to us, other than those which report chaos; if you have people working to understand the implications and the implications haven't even been understood or studied, I remain highly critical of the operation of this ministry.

If there are reports which your councils have, then I suggest to the minister, that the public has a right to know why there is this chaos. There has to be accountability by your ministry, as well as any other, whether you're a line ministry or not. The reports we're seeking are reports. I still will ask for them, as we get to the vote, because they're not cabinet confidentiality type reports. They are exactly what the

Morrow committee recommended and which were adopted by the House.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think that it's a little unfair to draw a parallel between the advisory councils that report to the secretariat and an interministerial council. They perform two different functions.

Mrs. Campbell: Precisely.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I don't have to tell you that the advisory council is made up of people outside government who are free to criticize and to publicize their reports and their criticisms and their recommendations. But when you get to an internal interministerial committee or council, perhaps we have to be careful with terminology. They are charged with bringing forward for consideration at cabinet policy level all of the pros and cons of a stated intention policy; and those, I suggest, are confidential.

Mrs. Campbell: We haven't suggested anything else. We have suggested that we shouldn't confuse the two in the reporting system.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think perhaps we should clarify, for everyone's benefit then, the difference in the different councils that are available and that do advise the policy secretariat.

Mrs. Campbell: I think it would be good to know which sit in closed session and which sit in open session, and why. I'm speaking of the councils; not the interministerial committees, the councils.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: The only councils that I have reporting to me are the four advisory councils; and then I have the Council on Troubled Children and Youth, which is primarily an interministerial committee.

Mrs. Campbell: Perhaps that's why what we got out of it was so blah, if I may suggest it.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: You may suggest and I—

Mrs. Campbell: It was full of sound and fury, signifying positively nothing. May I then just go to the one—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Perhaps I should bring up another—because it is in the briefing book, the Council on Rehabilitation Services. Again, that's an interministerial committee reporting to the social policy field with recommendations that will go on to determine future policy. I suggest to you that is confidential information as well. That's an advisory council.

Mrs. Campbell: Well the others are too. The others are listed as advisory.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: As I pointed out, perhaps we should be a little more careful of the terminology in describing the function of these different groups.

Mrs. Campbell: I think it would be helpful to understand why some are deemed to be confidential, made up of outside people, and some are not confidential made up of outside people. That's the sort of thing that's bothering me.

But you say the committee on youth, the advisory committee on youth, is interministerial?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes, it's made up of representatives from government.

Mrs. Campbell: Don't you think it'd be a good idea to get some fresh air blowing in from the outside on that one?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Some of the ad hoc committees that have been established do have people from outside government serving on them.

Mrs. Campbell: And are they open?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, they meet as a sub-committee.

Mrs. Campbell: Everything is so confidential. I would think that maybe there are people outside who have very good ideas about youth committees and other things which might be more precise.

[5:30]

May I just finally get back to that question I was discussing with you about the employment of people in the service of the elderly. I note that the implication seems to be that you will pay \$20 a day salary, no administrative costs, nothing else; and then if the municipality was to subsidize that beyond \$20 a day, they would be welcome to do so. But that is the range we are talking about for employment; and this is not summer employment, this is year-round employment. The care of the elderly is, again, really a question of saying to people: "Look, we are committed to a service to the elderly to keep them out of institutions. We are not committed to funding it at any kind of level that will, perhaps, attract the people with special skills." I don't understand it. Are you going to replace the VON's and the St. Elizabeth?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No.

Mrs. Campbell: Then how can you have two levels of nursing care? Are you going to define the kind of nursing care that you expect nurses to give? Are you perhaps going to have a breakthrough in that physiotherapists will enter this field, since they are now in a very poor position? Do you realize that they—mostly women, not all—used to have a salary 10 per cent higher than registered nurses? Today they are five per cent lower. You are not going to let them practise privately, unless they buy a practice; and if they buy a practice they can have stability in the practice for a maximum of only 15 years, probably for only 10 years. Has that been referred to the status of women?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No. But I would like to enlarge upon some comments I made yesterday about the pilot project that was taking place to provide home care for patients with chronic illnesses. I mentioned at that time that there were three pilot projects: Hamilton, Kingston and Thunder Bay. Those programmes offer a very wide range of services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, sick room equipment, homemaking services, drugs, dressing and nursing services. We understand these are coming on very well.

Mrs. Campbell: How are they funded?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: From the province.

Mrs. Campbell: At what rate?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I don't know, but I will find out for you.

Mr. Kerrio: Put some of that UIC money in there, Margaret.

Mr. McClellan: Not at 50 per cent.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No. Again, when you allude to the fact that this programme is meant to take the place of existing home care and home nursing services, that is not what it is intended to do. It is intended to supplement present services, as well as provide home maintenance, light housekeeping, those kind of things; with the home care and the home nursing services being provided as well in many communities.

Mrs. Campbell: If municipalities are not involved—if you can get people at \$20 a day and that is going to be your contribution—what is the reaction of the municipality going to be about support of VON and St. Elizabeth, if you are going to get trained nurses working in the field at \$20 a day?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I don't for one moment think we are going to get trained nurses working in the field for \$20 a day. That came up yesterday when someone mentioned the numbers of nurses who are not employed. That is not to say they would not be given the opportunity if they chose to do so; but realistically speaking I can't see very many trained nurses coming forward to work for \$20 a day. By the way, it is 100 per cent funding on a budget review basis for those three pilot projects.

Mr. Chairman: One hundred per cent, Ross, how do you like that one?

Mrs. Campbell: One hundred per cent funding. But you don't know at what rate? How are the ceilings arrived at? They are not open-ended programmes are they?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: They are pilot projects. It is based on a budget review, what the costs are. Then 100 per cent funding is based on that.

Mrs. Campbell: Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: They are very successful programmes.

Mrs. Campbell: I'm delighted.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We'd like one in Metro Toronto.

Mrs. Campbell: Indeed! I would like to have one in Metro Toronto.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think it's a two-year period for these pilot projects.

Mr. Chairman: Mrs. Campbell, are you through?

Mrs. Campbell: Yes, for the time being.

Ms. Sandeman: We don't have a great deal of time. I'll have more time tomorrow, will I?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Excuse me, before you go on, may I just respond to Mr. McClellan's query about the boy in Kingston? I have some information on that, if you would like to have it.

Mr. McClellan: Yes, I would very much.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: The boy is aged 15. Oakville is trying to find a Kingston placement. The judge has ordered that the boy cannot leave Oakville until the placement is found. If no placement is found within three weeks, the boy is to be duly returned to Hillcrest. The case is to be dealt with by the section 8,

hard-to-place committee this week, as the boy is an extremely difficult person to place.

Ms. Sandeman: May I respond to that, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, go ahead.

Ms. Sandeman: That's a very interesting device.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: He was already a section 8 child from before. He is not a new section 8; that's the problem.

Ms. Sandeman: Oh, I see.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: If I could give you this information as it's just been brought to my attention, the probation and after-care officer brought this boy to court and charged him with assault under section 9. The judge decided to send him back to training school at Oakville for three weeks to find a placement. The hard-to-place committee is working now to find a suitable placement for this boy. We are delighted that it isn't an illegal thing.

Mr. McClellan: Thank you very much for giving me this.

Ms. Sandeman: Yes, that puts our mind at rest. When you were halfway through your answer, I interrupted you. I suddenly had the vision of a new device opening up, of this hard-to-place, section 8 committee being used as a tool, but obviously that's not happening.

I am not quite sure where to start. I think I'd like to start in the middle of your briefing book, though perhaps I'm not allowed to because it's item 2 under social development councils. Are we allowed to do that, or do I have to stay with the policy? Stay with the policy. If I hadn't said that, nobody would have known. There is all kind of latitude. I was just trying to find something that would fit into 22½ minutes.

I will start in your briefing book with, first of all, the interministerial Council on Rehabilitation Services, which is described in section 3, page 3, of your very helpful briefing book. I must say in my short time in the Legislature that's really the best material I've had coming to estimates. I must tell you that when I went to Corerectional Services estimates last year and asked the minister if he had a blue book or a briefing book, he said what's that? So we didn't have very much help at that stage.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I'm delighted you're pleased. With all the criticism, it's kind of nice to have something complimented. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sandeman: I am softening you up. That's enough for compliments, my colleague says here.

Could I start by asking just for information? I am not clear what is the working relationship between the interministerial Council on Rehabilitation Services and the Advisory Council on the Physically Handicapped. They are both reporting, as I understand, to the provincial secretary. Their terms of reference seem to be very much the same when one looks at the information given here. I am wondering is there a working relationship, or do we have two hard-working groups duplicating the work of each other?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: We have a very good relationship, as a matter of fact, between our advisory councils and government internal advisory groups. They exchange a great deal of information. The government councils or advisory groups make themselves available for the advisory councils whenever there is a suggestion of a consultation. They really do have a very good relationship. This is fairly new, the interministerial Council of Rehabilitation Services reporting to the secretariat. We have just had one progress report but I am expecting great things from them.

They have two different functions. The Advisory Council for the Physical Handicapped is an advisory group made up of people outside of government which brings forth recommendations. The interministerial councils bring together those ministries that are involved in rehabilitation services with the hope that we will be able to provide a more co-ordinated planning approach to the provision of rehabilitation services throughout government.

Ms. Sandeman: I would like to turn to the work of the advisory council which is described in the fifth section. Maybe I could start with some specific questions. It seems to me there are three basic areas in which the disabled, as so many other groups in society, need support and help. They are income maintenance, housing and transportation. In section 5, page 6, on transportation for the physically handicapped, you discuss the proposed parallel public transit system and the modifications to existing public transit systems, but there is a third option for getting disabled people around, the personal transportation system. There's a very revealing statement there that study is needed.

The advisory council's report to you says: "Study is needed concerning the number of disabled requiring the provision of such a programme and the according cost." I would

like to suggest that it is not only study of the number of disabled people who need personal transportation that we need but I have a suspicion we still don't know what disabled people we have in our community, and what their needs are. A very basic programme should be undertaken to discover disabled people.

I know, for instance, of a fellow sitting in bed in an upstairs room in the backwoods of Ontario, a paraplegic whose needs are not being met. I don't imagine anybody in the social service world knows about him. I presume he is getting a family benefits pension. If he is not, he ought to be. But there's a lot of people hidden away, particularly in rural Ontario and in small towns, whom we don't know about.

I wanted to ask you if you had ever considered the kind of action that is at the basis of the British Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, of which the first provision, which is the basis on which all the other provisions for the chronically sick and disabled are built, is that it shall be the duty of every local authority—as you know, in Britain local authorities look after social services all around—to inform themselves of the number of persons to whom section 29 of The National Assistance Act applies, that is the portion that deals with disabled persons.

In other words, one starts with finding out who the disabled people are and the need for making arrangements under that section for such persons. Until you know who your client group is and what they need, it's pretty hard to put a sensible service network into place. So I think that we don't need only a study to see how many people need cars or invalid tricycles, or whatever it may be for the disabled, but we need a study to find out just what disabled people we have in Ontario; and I don't think we really do know.

[5:45]

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No; and it's very difficult to find out. We have a housing project with the care package involved in Windsor. Before they got under way, in an effort to find out just what the needs were, really, for housing accommodation for physically handicapped in Windsor, they did a survey. They had a great deal of difficulty in getting people to come forward even to register as being disabled and being in need of that kind of accommodation. They found it very frustrating.

These were a group of disabled people themselves who found out that disabled people, by and large, were very loath to come forward and acknowledge the fact that they needed that kind of particular accommodation. I've heard that many times, as far as transportation is concerned. Again, people just are not too willing to admit they're disabled unless they're desperately in need of transportation. I don't know how you'd go about getting that kind of information.

Ms. Sandeman: It's up to the government to devise the strategies, but I can think of all kinds of ways. We have this enormous pool of unemployed young people. Although we don't want to be only concerned with making short-term summer jobs, a very useful short-term summer project would be a kind of census in all communities which wish to do it, and ultimately I would hope all communities. It would be a census of every household asking the right kind of questions: "Do you have anybody living in this house who finds it difficult to move around? Do you have anyone living in this house who cannot leave the house because of"—et cetera.

We had an OFY project in Peterborough which did a survey of elderly people and turned up some really useful information. Unfortunately, the services to deal with the needs that were discovered haven't been put into place. That was taken just on a random survey basis. I would like to see us really getting into discovering disabled people.

The knee-jerk reaction is to say: "My God, the cost!" But in the long run, if you can free disabled people from the prison of their homes and have them working productively, as a proportion of them I know could if proper transportation were provided, then the cost benefits and the personal benefits begin to make some sense. We could discuss strategies for that. Put me on your advisory committee and I'll find you some strategies.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Next time around I'd be very happy to.

Ms. Sandeman: In the meantime, I'd like to be a little more specific, because what we have before us right now is what you're doing, not what in the best of all possible worlds you might do. I did notice that in section 5, page 6, of your briefing book the advisory council suggested to you that study is needed. Under the "action taken" column, there's absolutely no comment at all as to whether you intended to have a study or whether the advisory council should perhaps themselves set up a study. There is no comment at all as to whether you felt that was a

good idea or a bad idea. Do you want to comment?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I think the advisory council themselves are attempting to do a study or a survey in that area. It's just been brought to my attention that there is in British Columbia a voluntary registry for the disabled organized by the provincial government. Perhaps something like that might be a good idea, to allow people to register voluntarily if they were handicapped in any way.

Ms. Sandeman: Yes. It's certainly a start. The dangers of requiring registration are very obvious, but I think we have a duty to discover the number.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Don't you think with some of the programmes we do have under way—and I'm thinking of many programmes that are now available to handicapped people—word of mouth gets around that there are transportation facilities available now? There are many voluntary programmes available in many communities. With some of the voluntary programmes that are available for handicapped people and the educational opportunities, the more this becomes available and the general community becomes knowledgeable, you'll find more and more people coming forward and becoming involved.

Ms. Sandeman: Yes, that's one way of doing it; and that's happening in my own community where we have an excellent and already overburdened transportation system for the disabled. But you only have the disabled people coming forward in that case because there is a service they can use. What we need to find are the disabled people for whom we are not providing services, so that we know what services to provide. Rather than thinking, yes, probably there is a need for a transportation service for the disabled in Peterborough, do a little pilot survey, find out that there is and put it on. We need, really, a whole spectrum of knowledge about who are the disabled, what they need and where they need it, rather than this ad hocery around the province. This isn't to say that the pilot study in Peterborough, at any rate—and it is the only one I can speak of at first hand on bringing public transportation to the physically disabled—isn't an overwhelming success. I would have to say that project got off the ground because of local initiative, by service groups and the disabled themselves, and it was then picked up on by the ministry, not the other way around. Transportation for the elderly and disabled and anybody who has trouble moving around, I

think that is an area in which this government is sadly lacking in provision of services.

I asked a question of you today in the House, Madam Minister, on income maintenance.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes.

Ms. Sandeman: I was a little disturbed, as a matter of fact. I'd like to ask you about the timetable of this briefing book. It seems to me this briefing book has probably been prepared within the last couple of weeks. On many pages there's a date—21/4/77—and if that is so, and you were given this report on income maintenance from your advisory council in February of this year, why would you say in the briefing book prepared maybe just a week ago: "It is our understanding that this report is nearing completion and it is anticipated that the report and recommendations will be presented very shortly"? I'm suggesting that you already had it, and that the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: I would take exception to that remark. I had met with the committee on income maintenance for the physically handicapped. I went over to the advisory council's office and discussed the report with the members of that particular committee. I was not given the report. They told me they were prepared to make it public, which they did—I believe it was yesterday or the day before, I'm not too sure which. But immediately the report was made public I had sent copies to all of the ministers who are concerned with certain recommendations that are here; so there was nothing to suggest that it wasn't done immediately it came to my attention.

Ms. Sandeman: I see. You got it when we got it.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: Yes—officially, yes. But I had discussed the recommendations in the report back—when? about three weeks ago I believe it was.

Ms. Sandeman: Between February and the present time you had discussed the recommendations?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: The recommendations that were in the report.

Ms. Sandeman: Did you then discuss with the people involved in the decision about the amount of increase for family benefits, the very clear and specific recommendations in this report about increases and the amount of increases necessary?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: No, I have not discussed this report with the ministers involved in any of the recommendations. I have sent copies of the report to each of the ministries.

Ms. Sandeman: Is there any chance, then, that now you have this we shall see another speedy increase in the family benefits and the GAINS D payments, based on information which your advisory council has given you and which seems to be incontrovertible; and there are apparently detailed supplements available. One hardly needs it, for a lot of this—

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It's an excellent report.

Ms. Sandeman: It is, excellent. When are you going to take action on it, then, to implement?

Hon. Mrs. Birch: In view of the fact that the ministers involved, and I think there are about four or five of them who have received copies, are outside of my policy field—for example the Treasurer (Mr. McKeough) has received a report, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Rhodes) has received a report and the Minister of Revenue (Mrs. Scrivener) were all involved in these recommendations, that's three ministries outside of this policy field—I would hope that just as soon as I have their responses we'll sit down and discuss it within our own policy field.

Ms. Sandeman: Are you going to push as soon as possible for increases to the level that is being suggested here? In fact, events have already overtaken them because they used figures from February and in terms of the increase in the cost of living we saw a two per cent increase last month. I'm really concerned, because I don't know what kind of feed-back you have been getting after the Minister of Community and Social Services, (Mr. Norton's), announcement last Thursday, but I have been hearing from family benefit recipients, particularly disabled people, an enormous amount of disappointment; in some cases tinged with despair.

They knew, because I had told them, that Mr. Norton had promised an increase and that he was looking at all the factors. They were hoping against hope they would be able to catch up. They really haven't been given a chance to catch up with their expenses.

Those disabled people who are aware of the existence of the advisory council I am sure will believe, perhaps naively, that the careful recommendations of the income maintenance committee, or whatever it's called, will be

acted upon. They will hope there'll be a kind of supplementary increase to last week's disappointing announcement. What I'd like to know from you is are you prepared, on behalf of the disabled people, to take the advice and recommendations that come from your advisory councils and really push them? I know the Treasurer is going to make his usual noises about where is the money coming from, but we have some priorities surely.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: It has just been brought to my attention that increases since 1972 have averaged 12 per cent. I really am delighted with that advisory council, as I am with all of my advisory councils. I've found that the recommendations of this one in particular are always so reasonable and make such good common sense. With that comment I will be awaiting the responses of my colleagues in the other ministries and will be proceeding from there.

Ms. Sandeman: Yes, they are full of common sense. They say that themselves. The council feels that the accompanying recommendations are workable, equitable and a matter of first priority. I'd agree with that. That's a red herring about the increase since 1972, because the last increase in the pensions for the disabled was a couple of years later than that and hasn't kept up with the cost of living since the date of the last increase. We would probably need nearer to a 16 per cent increase at this stage.

In the last two moments could I just ask you about a recommendation here that doesn't directly, though it might indirectly, involve the expenditure of money, and that's recommendation No. 11, which I hope would speak directly to you. It is recommended that married disabled females be allowed to apply for assistance under FBA, GAINS D in their own right. I think the present regulations, quite frankly, are in contravention of the Ontario Human Rights Code, because married disabled women are treated differently from married disabled men.

Once again, this has been brought to your attention. The advisory council in their usual common sense way say they can find no justification for this and recommend that it be changed so that men and women are treated equally.

Hon. Mrs. Birch: As I say, they are very reasonable recommendations. I can say no more.

Mr. Chairman: It is almost the time to adjourn. There is a desire to try to get some

of the private members' bills heard. One of them that we've got which appears rather important is the private bill respecting the Brockville General Hospital. That was one of them. The other is the one that we're publicly advertising on. Is there any objection, if we can get the material and the people together Thursday, to meet on Thursday? Is there a problem there?

Mr. McClellan: Morning, afternoon and evening?

Mr. Chairman: After question period. Would that create an undue hardship?

Mr. McClellan: All three of us are speaking on the private member's bill.

Ms. Sandeman: I'm speaking on two private members' bills. Not that you can't keep it up.

Mr. McClellan: It's possible for the moment we could do it, but I doubt whether we could be here all the time.

[6:00]

Mr. Chairman: A lot of you are committed on other committees and I can appreciate it. I would have liked to have done it. I don't think I am going to force you to do it. I don't think I can force you to do it, but I don't think I would like to do that at any rate.

Mr. McClellan: Normally it would be possible, Mr. Chairman. It is just circumstance that three of the four of us on the committee are speaking on a private member's bill on Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Chairman: We may try to do it Monday.

Ms. Sandeman: I would just add that Mrs. Campbell's own private member's bill also will be before the House on Thursday, so it would be unlikely that she could be here.

Mr. Chairman: We will see if we can do it on Monday. Is it the understanding that we meet tomorrow at 2 o'clock?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

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Grande, A. (Oakwood NDP)
Kerrio, V. (Niagara Falls L)
McClellan, R. (Bellwoods NDP)
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